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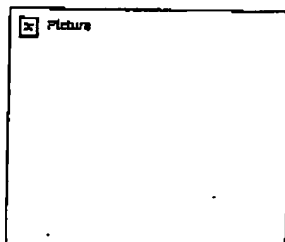
Exhibit A

Editorial

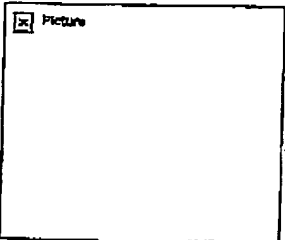
behind the scenes of the RONIN online event



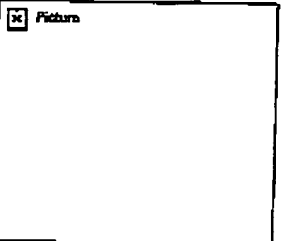
On [REDACTED] MGM Home Entertainment will release John Frankenheimer's action thriller "Ronin" on DVD and will use this release to ring in a new era for DVD technology.



"Ronin" is a gritty action caper about a group of undercover operatives led by Robert DeNiro. They have to recover a top-secret briefcase, working against every major underworld group in the world, groups that will stop nothing to get it. It is a furious game of confusion with a high-caliber international cast and sensational car chases, created by one of Hollywood's most successful veteran directors of the genre, John Frankenheimer. Apart from the widescreen and the pan & scan version of this teeth-clenching film, MGM's release of "Ronin" will play a substantial part in an exciting Internet event that will bring fans of the movie closer to the makers of the film.



On [REDACTED] MGM will present a first-of-its-kind online event hosted by John Frankenheimer himself, an event that will take DVD to new heights through the use of the Internet and DVD-ROM's enhanced capabilities. In order to participate you will need a PC running Windows 95/98, a DVD-ROM drive and an Internet connection with a minimum speed of 28.8kb. The event will feature a 25-minute tour of the making of the film, illustrated by storyboards, never-before-seen behind-the-scenes footage, and action sequences and stills from the film, completely organized over the Internet. From the day "Ronin" goes on sale on [REDACTED] owners of the disc can log on to a special website through the DVD-ROM section of their disc, and submit questions to director John Frankenheimer. On [REDACTED] then the director will address a selection of these questions live during the event and illustrate everything he explains with live-action scenes from the film and other available material to create an amazing experience for all fans of his work. Followed by a 30-minute live online chat session, fans will also have the chance to talk to Frankenheimer directly.



The technical implications to create and host such an event are quite daring, and MGM has been treading unknown territory by doing so. We were able to meet with MGM's Dave Miller, who gave us a look behind the scenes of the upcoming "Ronin" event. In the heart of Hollywood, Miller showed us some of the technology that is used to make this online session possible, as well as some of the footage used during the event. He gave us a pretty good idea of what the entire presentation will look and feel like when it finally goes live on [REDACTED] after more than 8 months of painstaking preparation. To understand the importance of the event, we have to take a look at some figures first. "Currently there are about 1.2 million DVD players sold to people in the US," Miller explains, "and by the end of [REDACTED] this number is expected to be more than 2.4 million." One aspect of DVD is still highly underrated, however: its market penetration through DVD-ROM drives, which makes the number of DVD Video players look almost pale by comparison.

*According to market research company Infotech there are currently 5 to 6 million DVD-ROM drives installed in the United States and by the end of [REDACTED] this number will rocket to somewhere between 28 and 31 million when DVD-ROM is replacing the current CD technology

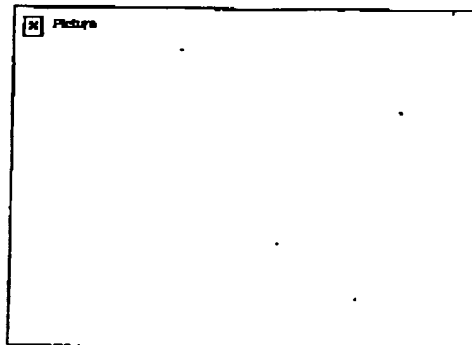
Ronin Online Event

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forever", Miller confirms our research. He points out that it is a market that has not fully been tapped by Hollywood studios at this point, although many of the current efforts from studios like New Line are very promising. To further DVD's appeal and expand the market beyond the scope of DVD Video players, MGM is now taking active - and very innovative - steps to enhanced DVD-ROM features, like the "Ronin" online event.

Since the Internet is not yet capable of handling high-quality full-motion-video streams to realize a smooth-looking presentation like "Ronin", the key to make it work lies within DVD-ROM's enhanced capabilities. "There are a vast number of small movie snippets from B-reels encoded on the Ronin disc when you buy it," Miller tells us. "These snippets are not accessible from a DVD Video player and all of them are uniquely indexed." While all these film snippets and bloopers from unused, so-called B-reels are only a few seconds long and completely taken out of the film's context, the online event allows MGM to create a "playlist" especially for the presentation with John Frankenheimer. When users are logging on to the "Ronin" event website on [redacted] the "PC-Friendly" software that will be used to run the event will receive this playlist information from the event website during the presentation. It will make sure that the DVD-ROM player is reading and displaying these film elements from the DVD completely in sync with the event. This way every participant will hear and see exactly the same thing while the director's voice is broadcast live over the Internet, explaining and commenting on what you are seeing on your computer screen. Through this technology MGM is able to spawn playback of the film elements already encoded on the disc when you buy it, remotely, at any time from their website. It also allows them to record the event, so that users can log back on to the website at a later date to re-experience this entire event or see it for the first time, in case they missed it.

"The nice thing about this technology is that it allows us to use the material for other events as well," Miller enthuses. "If Robert DeNiro, for example, gets interested in this kind of online presentation and wants to talk about his involvement with the film, we could theoretically create another event for him and use completely different footage that is on the disc and hasn't been used in Frankenheimer's presentation."



This is the screen that will take you to the online event

The thought is truly inspiring. It would open up the doors to very interactive events where filmmakers talk about their projects in ways that are much more involving than standard commentary tracks and substantially less preoccupied than "Making Of" featurettes. MGM has high hopes for the event and expects some 60,000 visitors on the day of the event to be part of this unique presentation. Clearly, this kind of presentation not only appeals to film enthusiasts who want to meet and hear the director first-hand, but also to all those people with DVD-ROM drives in their computers who have ever wondered what to do with it, other than abusing it as a super-sized CD-ROM drive.

"If the event gathers enough momentum, we will certainly add this kind of presentation in future products as well", David Miller concludes. "We have Ben Hur in the making right now and wouldn't it be great if we could host such an event with Charlton Heston talking about some of the extraordinary scenes of the film, while we show people the storyboards, behind-the-scenes footage, and other materials? This technology opens completely new ways for us to add value to DVD, value that we simply cannot deliver on any other medium." Miller's enthusiasm is infectious as he shares his thoughts and vision of future MGM releases with us. He leaves no doubt about MGM's commitment to the DVD format, especially now that MGM also controls the major part of the former "Polygram Film Library".

Looking at all the material found on the "Ronin" disc and seeing a demonstration of the event on the computer screen, this presentation is definitely going to be something special. Without a doubt, it will be copied by other publishers in no time if the event succeeds and the prospect is great. It will elevate DVD to new heights, and it is once again an open-hand slap in the face of DVD's pay-per-view counterpart DIVX, which has yet to become DVD-ROM compatible.

So, warm up your DVD-ROM drives, submit your questions to director John Frankenheimer, and most importantly, don't miss the "Ronin" event on [redacted] at 8:00 p.m. (EST)

DVD Review's
Guide To DVD Easter Eggs

Ronin Online Bvent

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Home - On The Inside

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